

**Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Brockbank Middle School
2935 South 8560 West
Magna, Utah 84044**

March 17-18, 2005



Utah State Office of Education
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Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Brockbank Middle School
2935 South 8560 West
Magna, Utah 84044**

March 17-18, 2005

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Salt Lake City, Utah

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, March 17-18, 2005, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Brockbank Middle School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the visiting team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Carole Harris is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Brockbank Middle School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Brockbank Middle School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
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Bob Ward	Supervisor, School Lunch

BROCKBANK MIDDLE SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

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Rick Anthony Assistant Principal
Danny Stirland Intern Assistant Principal

Counseling

Carol Carroll Counselor
Alena Stejskal Counselor
Julie Wallace Counselor

Support Staff

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Maren Singleton
Ann Sorenson
Jayne Springman

Doris Stock
Lisa Thornbrue
Teresa Vaughn
Rob Wagner
Andrea Woodring

BROCKBANK MIDDLE SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Brockbank Middle School's mission is to guide our students to academic success while fostering social and emotional growth.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- Implementation of middle school principles – student teams, curriculum integration, teacher collaboration, subject exploration, and variety in instructional methods to increase student achievement.
- High academic expectations increase student achievement.
- Teachers are models, guides, and mentors who use research-based instructional methods to facilitate learning.
- A positive and safe learning environment is created through discipline, consistency, and collaboration between school and community.
- Social values, character development, and cultural respect are part of the curriculum.
- Students must come to accept responsibility for their own learning.
- Education is preparation for life.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

John Goldhardt, Ed.D., Snow Canyon Middle School, Washington County School District, Visiting Team Chairperson

Darcy Barney, Tooele Junior High School, Tooele County School District

Georgia Loutensock, Accreditation Specialist, Utah State Office of Education

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VISITING TEAM REPORT
BROCKBANK MIDDLE SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Brockbank Middle School opened its doors in 1949 as a midsize, community-based school in the center of Magna, somewhat isolated from the highly populated areas of Salt Lake City. At its highest level, Brockbank's enrollment reached 1,310 students, and the school contained 12 relocatable classrooms, employed 55 teachers, and initiated year-round school. With the opening of another junior high within two miles of Brockbank, the pressure of overcrowding was somewhat mitigated. Currently the school numbers 1,060 students.

The population of Brockbank Middle reflects the vast cultural and economic diversity within the community. Economically, the majority of students come from low- to middle-income families. From 2000 to 2002, the school's transience rate decreased from 39 to 25 percent, its poverty rate climbed from 38 to 44 percent, and the ethnic minority population increased from 16 to 22 percent.

Faced with the challenges of a highly mobile, ethnically diverse, and disproportionately low-income population, the school has embarked on a journey to turn around what had become an ongoing cycle of underachievement. Professional development became the cornerstone of school improvement and middle level implementation. Teachers have devoted hundreds of hours to workshops, conferences, and courses on block scheduling, gifted and talented instruction, integrated curriculum, and vertical instruction for mathematics and technology.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

The data shows that there is evidence of a steady improvement in CRT scores, academic success for ELL students, lower truancy rates, lower discipline rates, and increased community involvement in school policy and operation. In both 2003 and 2004, Brockbank met the standards of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as established by the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

Deeper data findings could have occurred if CRT, grading, and attendance data was disaggregated by ethnicity, poverty, ELL, and special education status. In addition, deeper data may also include data analysis of professional development practices and their impact upon teacher change and student achievement levels.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Disaggregate CRT data by ethnicity, ELL, poverty level, and special education subgroups.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

Brockbank Middle utilized a collaborative process that included teachers, parents, and students. One of the strengths of the study is the involvement of the stakeholders throughout the process. The ULC governing structure that is in place facilitated involvement and buy-in. The data has been used as a means for improvement.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The study is honest, accurate, and forthcoming. It spells out specifically who is learning and who is not learning. The school was not afraid to share its strengths and limitations.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Brockbank Middle School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. Effectively Communicate
 - Writing
 - Speaking
 - Listening
 - Reading
2. Proficiently Activate Learning
 - Skills
 - Knowledge
 - Problem Solving
 - Critical Thinking

3. Genuinely Appreciate
 - Self
 - Heritage
 - Cultural Diversity
 - Richness of Education

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

Both the school's self-study and informal interviews with teachers validate the school's efforts to involve an inclusive representation of teachers, students, parents, and community members in the process of achieving a shared vision for the school. The school's documentation of the process does not specify how many students and parents were actively involved in shaping the beliefs, mission, and goals. However, ample opportunity was given for the school's stakeholders to be involved in the process.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The faculty and administrators seem to genuinely buy into the beliefs stated in the school's self-study. Further, the belief statements are simple, commonsense reflections of how the school staff sees its mission. These beliefs appear to be tacit underpinnings of what goes on in the school's classrooms rather than canned phrases that teachers refer to.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

There appears to be effective alignment between the school's mission and beliefs in most areas.

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

The school has been divided into teams for the 7th and 8th grades. These teams have a prep period every other day, during which they get together to look at the core and come up with ways to teach the curriculum to all the students. They take

into account the at-risk students and the highly at-risk students by designing School Within a School (SWS) and SMART classes.

The 9th graders are not divided into teams, but there is still a plan to meet the needs of at-risk students.

While going through this process, each department met together several times review the curriculum and standards to look at where they are and what they need to do.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

The ULC teams are working together to ensure that the desired results for student learning are being met. Through continued professional development, the staff will develop the curriculum by focusing on the DRSLs.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

Brockbank Junior High School has been using the block schedule for the past five years. The 80-minute classes have opened many possibilities for teachers and students, but have also created the challenge of engaging students in meaningful learning experiences.

The Visiting Team found that the professional staff has developed a broad spectrum of learning experiences and instructional strategies. These included small groups, cooperative learning, interviews, hands-on learning, independent reading, experiments, product production, debate, technologically aided instruction, guest speakers, and PowerPoint presentations.

The team recommends that Brockbank Middle School continue to explore and apply a larger variety teaching strategies and learning experiences that will engage the students.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

In each class the Visiting Team observed a variety of teaching strategies, with teachers working to vary the mode of instructions to avoid the problems that can occur when middle school students are not engaged in the educational process. Although there are a variety of instructional strategies, clear evidence does not

exist that teachers are addressing the needs of student learning styles and the wide range of capabilities of the middle level learner.

Brockbank does an excellent job of addressing the needs of special education students in regular education classes by employing co-teaching between a subject area teacher and a special education teacher. The special education teacher is more than an aide. In several observed classrooms the two teachers traded off instruction and worked as a “well-oiled machine.” In core classes without co-teachers, the team planning time is sometimes used to assist the regular education teachers with strategies and helps for dealing with the special populations.

This school has made excellent progress in the number of teachers who are ESL-endorsed. Due to the school’s high number of ELL students, the Visiting Team recommends that additional teachers become ESL-endorsed.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

Brockbank Middle School has established teaming and a common prep period between the core subjects as an integral part of the schedule. Teaming has created a forum for sharing instructional strategies, providing mentoring support for new teachers, and (most notably) devising programs to support students in learning.

The Visiting Team commends the teachers at this school who provide before-school tutoring. With buses arriving at 7:30, students have the opportunity to access the help sessions. There is also a “Homework Club” offered to ESL students that meets for an hour after school and is manned by a Spanish-speaking aide. Ninth grade students who are at risk are supported by the “School Within a School” (SWS) and SMART programs. These pullout programs give small group instruction and assistance in social studies, science, and English. In addition there are groups such as, MESA, Art Club, SBO, Leadership Team, and sports, which extend student learning.

The student group voiced a wish for a broader range and volume of after-school activities.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

Individual teachers use a variety of assessments. However, there are no school-wide assessments based on articulated expectations other than norm-referenced tests and state CRTs. Some departments and grade level teams have begun work

on collaborative units and assessments. There was evidence of the development of cooperative department and team assessments.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

Most assessments other than norm-referenced and state tests appear to be developed by teachers to assess specific lessons or units. The school's expressed need to study the variety and implementation of research-based assessment is included as part of the school's action plan.

The Visiting Team recommends that research into assessment include formal, informal, and alternative types of assessments, and that departments and teams be encouraged to develop assessments as part of their collaborative efforts.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

Classroom assessments seem to be designed and used in a fair and equitable manner. The Visiting Team observed a variety of activities being used to assess student learning, including oral presentations, written evaluations, PowerPoint presentations, quizzes, and performances, to name a few. The implementation of a wider variety of assessments will provide greater evidence of student achievement.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

There is a clear and laser-like focus on academics and learning at Brockbank Middle School. The evidence to support this included reading and numeracy skills across the curriculum, as well as professional development that focuses upon literacy and adolescent development.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The decision-making process at Brockbank is indeed one of its greatest strengths. This school has effectively designed and implemented a governing structure that involves all of the stakeholders and promotes teacher and student leadership. The school has been involved with the ULC governance structure and has worked with Professor Bennion at the University of Utah in its implementation.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

The school leadership is continually looking at and using student data as a basis for decision-making. It was the data that prompted the leadership to focus upon literacy and to look at block scheduling so that students could still participate in exploratory courses.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

The school is safe and well-managed. The Visiting Team saw school administrators in the halls between classes, teachers at their doors between classes, and students beginning where they were supposed to be. The school is managed in an effective, efficient, and caring manner.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

Using the ULC governance model, resources are allocated based upon the compelling needs of the school. These needs are centered on student learning and achievement. Teachers and students told the Visiting Team time after time that decisions are always based upon what will be in the best interest of students.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The school leadership team has done a remarkable job empowering stakeholders in the school community. Parents are active and participate with the Community Council. The parents told the Visiting Team that their ideas are heard and considered. In addition, the parents on the Community Council are representative of the diverse student body at Brockbank.

The students participate with the student leadership team. This team meets often and is involved with decision making at the school. The students who met with the Visiting Team were open and honest about the school.

Teachers at Brockbank are fully empowered, and there are many teacher leaders on staff. Every teacher is a full participant as a member of a ULC governance committee. These committees make decisions about management, curriculum, instruction, and community involvement. Indeed, the greatest strength of the school's governance structure is its sustainability.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

The school is meeting the challenge of an ethnically diverse population in several ways. Brockbank has a parent center to help and support parents, especially parents and students who are not native speakers of English. Newsletters sent to parents from the school are printed in both English and Spanish. Because the school serves a population that includes many low-income families, the school staff has sponsored a “Brockbank Rack” where quality used clothing that has been donated is made available to parents at no cost.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

Within the school community (teachers, counselors, etc.) the most meaningful and effective support for student learning lies in the team approach that is made possible by the A/B block scheduling. With common preparation periods, teachers are given adequate time and an effective way to collaborate with one another in order to help individual students and plan integrated instructional units.

The school also has an ESL “Homework Club” to support non-native speakers of English. Also, teachers have individual websites that provide students and parents with information on homework, teacher information, etc.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

Brockbank has been involved with intense and focused professional development for several years. Professional development has focused upon literacy skills (reading and numeracy), as well as management and instructional issues that are associated with a block schedule.

The logical next step for the school is to design a comprehensive professional development plan that is focused upon the desired results for student learning and the action plan. The use of student data will help sustain this process so that professional development has transference to increased student learning and mastery of content standards.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

There is a creative and professional “buzz” in this school. Teachers are interested and involved with continual learning to improve their skills, and they are not afraid to ask for assistance from peers or to have peers observe their work so that they can improve.

Brockbank has successfully designed a culture where improvement for all, adults and students alike, is a mainstay.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Most Utah public junior high/middle schools are not accredited through NAAS, but only by the USOE—it is the school’s choice to join or not.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The plan is adequate and addresses needs for school improvement. The plan will have more strength and sustainability if it is more specific about people responsible and evidence of completion.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

The Visiting Team found overwhelming evidence that there is commitment to the action plan. Teachers consistently shared their commitment to the plan and to long-term improvement for student learning. In fact, one teacher told the Visiting Team, “If we get a principal who is not on board with us with school improvement, we will move on without them. He or she will need to keep up with us.”

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?*

There is a follow-up process in the plan. In order to strengthen the follow-up plan, please see the recommendations below.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the stakeholders for completing the self-study, for being honest and up front with their data, and for embedding the process as part of the overall school reform efforts.
- The Visiting Team commends the leadership team of the school—including Principal Harris, teacher leaders, and all teachers—for effective collaboration, good use of ULC governance, and a focus on student achievement and best practices for instruction and learning.
- The Visiting Team commends the entire staff for taking ownership of the self-study process—and, more importantly, for taking responsibility for improving student learning.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff of Brockbank Middle School for effective innovations such as SMART, SWS, Brockbank Rack, the parent center, and block scheduling. It was obvious to the Visiting Team that this staff makes decisions based upon what is best for students.
- The Visiting Team commends Brockbank Middle School for designing an invitational atmosphere where students and parents are treated with respect, concern, and care.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for its focus on the developmental needs of young adolescents and for following middle level practices such as interdisciplinary teaming, common planning time, a strong exploratory use of time (block schedule), and developmentally appropriate instructional practices.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that a comprehensive and embedded professional development plan be designed. This plan should be based upon the desired results for student learning, the action plan, and student formative and summative assessment data, and be focused upon practices to improve student learning.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the assessment goal of the action plan include action steps concerning the design of common content formative and summative assessments (that are aligned with Power Standards), as well as consensus scoring. This action step will allow the school to answer two essential questions for a Professional Learning Community (PLC): (1) “How do we know that our students are learning the content?” and (2) “What will we do if the students don’t learn the content?”
- The Visiting Team recommends that the communication goal in the action plan include an action step to update grades more frequently (once a week) on the school webpage and how student planners are to be used as a means of communication with students and parents.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the action plan include the specific people responsible for action steps and measurable and tangible evaluation. This will strengthen the plan and its overall impact upon improvement.